Brigitte Kaquet

For a Long Time I Have Believed ...

For a long time I have believed in the fire of the stage as if it were a deluge of stars. For a long time I have believed in the fire of the stage as if it were a wig, a shining mane, a stream of moonlight that covers nudity and illuminates the smile like a pearl-like tear. For a long time I have believed that the poetic image, the offering of the body, the burning of a pair of eyes are enough to replenish the sacred space of our visions.

Outside, the world. The Cirque Divers, great gardener of lies and of universal paradox, mirror in which our spectacular world is reflected in its peacefulness, funnel corridor where encounters melt in a drop of water, stage where daily gestures are theatricalised, platform on which the clowns struggle between laughter and death ... The parallel worlds penetrated our homes, we asked them in, we invited them. The liveliness of the roads invaded our cabaret-theatre, our lives, our every day activities ... The sacred space of my visions remained untouched.

For a long time we believed that History had its course. For a long time we believed that History was a river and that this river ran in only one direction, that it had a source and an outlet, that it only needed to follow that course, and that no other possibility existed. Two banks contained the mixed waters, it is only a matter of choice, we used to say. And then over there, towards the East, a wall fell.

Who am I to reveal the wounds of the world?

The need came by itself. I did not say anything, it came because of the force of things. A too filthy world, a river that overflows, banks that crack, meaning which is lost. Down there, towards the South, a bird breaks its wings, the child falls over from exhaustion ... There I have seen, or read, or I have been told - I don't know - that the army destroys houses and the women cry. They had wanted to live on this earth, their earth, while far away they drew borders and walls that they did not need, that crush them, and there, in the hills, one has given names to the villagers so the assassins could recognise them ... Here the foreigner...
has asked for papers, he wants to stay, he
does not want to go back down there, but
he is sent back there, one does not hear
anything more about him ... I have heard
that others march in the mountains and in
the forest ... Masked they have learnt to
fight so as to resist ...

At the sunrise of the month of December
we decorate the circus tent: wood and
mirrors, velvet and gold. It is under the tent
that women from Africa, citizens, nomads,
peasants are coming to sing. The world from
outside, fragments of voices, bursts of laughter,
the skin and the clothes ... A small part of
the continent down there is absorbed here in
our place, we allow them to invade our
lives, to warm our winter, to wash away our
greyness. The songs flow each evening and
tell us about daily life, the wars, love, exile,
poverty ... For a whole day we speak together,
all these women from afar and us, from
here. Sarah, Malika, Disco, Yande, Codou,
Fifi, Stella, Mini, Dido, Marie-Philomène,
Rose-Marie, Amy ... often words give way to
song, it is better like this, the song contains
sadness and happiness, conflicts and enti-
cement. Windows open onto the life down
there: Algeria, Black Africa. Resistance in
the towns, in the bush, in the desert.

This year we celebrate our twentieth
anniversary. The univocal thought flows
calmly along the river of History, the low
side of the wave has transformed into a
force that expels the poorest from the field
of economy, the parallel worlds are no
longer at the same level and they follow
different directions. Irony has given place
to discouragement, carelessness to need, lack
of seriousness is in search of ways to reach
dignity. The Cirque Divers persists, resists,
remains as a funnel-corridor, a stage or a
platform, a great garden ... We celebrate the
fiftieth issue of our political journal. With it
other thoughts, a different awareness and
preoccupation have been elaborated and
written down, all this has marched
alongside the songs from the world, the
cultures in resistance, the women of Africa ...
The sacred space of my visions has
dissolved with this desert stream, water-
tight partitions were not justifiable there.

So then theatre has become a place of
transit and the men, women and children
that populate the world, those wounded by
time, those broken down by solitude and
injustice, the un-born, those without name
and without anything, the assassinated
nomads, rebels and exiles have entered the
stage. And then tears - all the tears of the
world - have wanted to flow onto paper and
pass through the voice, the palms, the eyes
of the actors.

And this is what the tears sang:

Cry, cry Man of the World. Cry the lost river,
cry the assassinated equality. Cry, cry Man of
the World. The lie of your people. Cry. We the
thousand and hundred Tears, the pearl-like
solitudes, we beg you to cry. We Tears want
your eyes, poor and blind, we search for the
iris, the pupil, the cornea of your eyes. They
should shed us. We, all the tears of the world,
want to slip into your wavering thoughts,
in your trembling eyelids, within your
hesitating nerves. Cry, cry old man, we are the
tears of the world. Tears of the people and of
the wind, tears of the earth and of its open
veins, thousands and hundreds, pearl-like
solitudes. We want to cross over your mouth
and speak, we tears of exile and poverty, tears
of drought and glaciers. We sing, yes we want
to sing, we want to sing through your throat,
we want to sing with your voice, we want to
shout with your voice. Dance, dance old man
with wet eyes, dance on the abyss of your tears.
Dance on the abyss of your tears, with your
feet we want to dance, with your feet we want
to dance, with your feet we want to dance ...

Night is different from one continent to the
other. Down there, no constellations from my childhood. Lying on my back at the doors of the desert I searched in vain for the bears and the chariots while the divine dog, my old Greek philosopher, Diogenes the Cynic, was wandering in my thoughts. Five years later, together we went along the small and steep paths of writing and staging. With him the public squares have occupied the space of my intimate visions, and they are populated by dogs and countryless beggars and philosophers, camels, nomads, India, Africa, the Ganges, the Styx, the Nile and the Niger ... The different worlds - real and imaginary - merge and dissolve, they become hybrid. Water-tight partitions are no longer justifiable. The old impotency has become a need.

Who am I to forget time?
I no longer see how I can write, play, sing about anything else than this time which envelops us, about terror and lies. The dust of the world searches for places where it can land. Mown down lives, skinned hopes, disappeared childhoods, the hidden, ill, excluded people, constellations which belong to the margins and to the small streets - they search for places where they can be. Then poems decide. They make themselves into a passageway, clear space, corner of the sky so that this rain of stars falls onto the stage, onto the planks, onto the pages of our books.

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